AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 4 and 6 without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A construction beam comprising a tubular housing filled with a solid material having a Poisson's ratio, wherein the tubular housing is constructed such that a Poisson's ratio of the tubular housing is less than the solid material ~~to thereby confine the solid material~~, the tubular housing forming part of the construction beam, wherein the tubular housing and the solid material are formed of materials that effect a beam strength exceeding that of a correspondingly sized wood construction beam.

2. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 1, further comprising at least one reinforcing rod in the tubular housing such that the solid material surrounds the reinforcing rod.

3. (Currently Amended) A construction beam ~~according to claim 2~~ comprising a tubular housing filled with a solid material having a Poisson's ratio, wherein the tubular housing is constructed such that a Poisson's ratio of the tubular housing is less than the solid material, the tubular housing forming part of the construction beam, wherein the tubular housing and the solid material are formed of materials that effect a beam strength exceeding that of a correspondingly sized wood construction beam, and wherein the at least one reinforcing rod is stressed using one of a pretension method and a post-tension method in the tubular housing.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A construction beam ~~according to claim 1~~ comprising a tubular housing filled with a solid material having a Poisson's ratio, wherein the tubular housing is constructed such that a Poisson's ratio of the tubular housing is less than the solid material, the tubular housing forming part of the construction beam, wherein the tubular housing and the solid material are formed of materials that effect a beam strength exceeding that of a correspondingly sized wood construction beam, wherein the solid material is concrete, ~~and~~ wherein the construction beam further comprises at least one reinforcing rod in the tubular housing, the concrete being formed in the tubular housing after placing the reinforcing rod, and wherein the at least one reinforcing rod is prestressed prior to forming the concrete in the tubular housing.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 1, wherein the tubular housing is formed of a fiber reinforced polymer.

8. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 7, wherein the solid material is concrete.

9. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 8, further comprising at least one reinforcing rod in the tubular housing.

10. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 9, wherein the reinforcing rod is formed of a material selected from the group comprising steel, carbon, fiberglass, and Kevlar.

11. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 7, wherein the solid material is a material selected from the group comprising concrete, fiber reinforced concrete, polymer concrete, sand, and structural foam.

12. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 7, wherein the tubular housing is formed of a material selected from the group comprising fiberglass, carbon, and Kevlar.

13. (Original) A construction beam according to claim 1, wherein the tubular housing comprises a geometrically-shaped cross-section.

14. (Currently Amended) A deck system comprising a plurality of construction beams secured side-to-side, wherein each of the construction beams comprises a tubular housing filled with a solid material having a Poisson's ratio, wherein the tubular housing is constructed such that a Poisson's ratio of the tubular housing is less than the solid material ~~to thereby confine the solid material~~, the respective tubular housings forming part of each of the construction beams.

15. (Original) A deck system according to claim 14, wherein each of the construction beams further comprises at least one transverse aperture therein defining a corresponding at least one transverse channel, the deck system further comprising at least one reinforcing bar extending through the transverse channel.

16. (Original) A deck system according to claim 15, wherein the at least one reinforcing bar is secured in the transverse channel under tension to provide a transverse post-stress in the deck system.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a construction beam comprising filling a tubular housing with a solid material having a Poisson's ratio, the tubular housing forming a part of the construction beam, wherein the tubular housing is constructed such that a Poisson's ratio of the tubular housing is less than the solid material ~~to thereby confine the solid material~~, wherein the tubular housing and the solid material are formed of materials that effect a beam strength exceeding that of a correspondingly sized wood construction beam.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 17, further comprising securing at least one reinforcing rod in the tubular housing such that the solid material surrounds the reinforcing rod.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the securing step comprises placing the at least one reinforcing rod under tension prior to filling the tubular housing with the solid material such that the reinforcing rod is prestressed in the tubular housing.

20. (Original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the solid material is concrete.

21. (Previously Presented) A construction beam comprising a tubular housing filled with a solid material and at least one prestressed reinforcing rod embedded in the solid material, the tubular housing forming part of the construction beam.

22. (Previously Presented) A method of forming a construction beam comprising:

securing at least one reinforcing rod in a tubular housing;

placing the at least one reinforcing rod under tension; and

filling the tubular housing with a solid material such that the solid material surrounds the at least one reinforcing rod, the tubular housing forming a part of the construction beam.